

WAVEMACHINE LABS DRUMAGOG 5 'PLATINUM'

When your drum tracks suck the big kahuna, it's time to give them a damn good 'gogging'.

Text: Calum Orr



Eight years ago I discovered a plug-in that has since saved many an ill-recorded drum session from the virtual dustbin. Over the years, sessions sent to me to mix by other engineers, or sessions I myself have recorded, have regularly been given 'the Gog' drum replacement treatment (as it's come to be known at my studio), whether it be to augment the drum sounds, replace them altogether or a mixture of both. Quite often my clients have become so enamoured with the program that they've later quipped: "Hey Cal, can you 'Gog' the drums on the next song too please?"

FOUR INTO FIVE

Version 4 of Wavemachine Labs Drumagog is hands down my most oft used plug-in. While the program has saved many a mix from mediocrity, the hit detection algorithms and delay compensation facility has often meant that files have had to be shifted forward in time by small amounts of samples to maintain phase coherence (a small price to pay for the vastly improved tones it provided).

Armed with this knowledge and myriad requests from a huge user group, Rim 'Shot' Buntinas – Wavemachine Labs' main man – has since addressed these issues, and v5 was recently released to wide acclaim.

Once purchased from Wavemachine Labs' online store, the Drumagog download itself is 127MB, while the proprietary 'gog' files containing thousands of multi-layered drum samples is around 1.2GB. Installation on Mac systems comes in AU, VST and RTAS flavours, and on Windows systems, VST and RTAS. Authorisation is via a Pace iLok key (not supplied).

NEW FEATURES

At first glance, the new Drumagog GUI is impressive, and has a decidedly 'pro' look and feel about it. The new facelift includes many new features including an advanced triggering engine that can distinguish between left- and right-hand hits, and even open, closed or semi-open hi-hats! Just like in v4, getting the replacement happening is as easy as moving the sensitivity slider up and down to 'catch' the required hits. There are also Transient Detail and Resolution sliders to enable more precise viewing, as well as input and output faders for the source sound being triggered and the replaced output file. So as to eliminate other sounds – like bleed from other drums triggering the samples – the program also now features a comprehensive

filter section for the trigger, that includes high- and low-pass, band and band-reject filters that have adjustable 'Q' controls for really honing in on the source sound. The filters really come into their own when the tempo is quick and the drum recording contains lots of flourishes.

Another great addition in v5 is the 'Random Multisamples' option, which – as the name suggests – randomises the drum samples being replayed. To my ears this option produces a far more realistic and natural result. The function runs deep too, with the user having the ability to set groups of samples to trigger at varying velocities. On the other hand, if you want to have greater consistency across a track, you can apply the 'Dynamic Tracking' tool, which makes the samples more regular and smoothes out the performance. This feature works particularly well in songs that have a more straight-ahead rock feel.

A new effects section, featuring a built-in convolution reverb, adds yet more strings to Drumagog's bow. This section allows you to create realistic spaces for the samples without having to leave the plug-in, and sports 30 impulse responses to get you started. It also gives you the option of importing your own IRs later. The same effects section also incorporates the new 'Morph Engine', which is great for adding odd flavours to the mix in, say, a breakdown or an outro. I haven't explored this feature's potential with any great gusto yet, but I'm sure the Morph Engine will be put to good use by the bold and the electro-leaning. Likewise, the drum synth section lets you make alternate versions of your drum sounds, which will no doubt prove invaluable for re-mix engineers, dance producers and the more adventurous mix engineers among us.

Saving the best to last, probably the most ambitious new feature in Drumagog 5 is its ability to trigger other drum software, like FXpansion's BFD, Toontracks' Superior Drummer and others, from within Drumagog. This is a fantastic timesaving feature, vastly more practical than the original workaround measure, which involved converting audio to MIDI, which was all a bit mind-numbing for yours truly.

There are many other features – like auto hi-hat tracking, greatly improved preset management and a fantastic new interface – that make Drumagog 5 a no-brainer upgrade for existing users and a must try for those who haven't 'gogged' yet. ■

NEED TO KNOW

Price

US\$379

Contact

Drumagog Online
www.drumagog.com/store

Pros

Improved GUI.
Advanced features.
In-built effects.
Great new filter section.

Cons

Still can't import standard file types.

Summary

If you mix records for a living, or even for your own amusement, but haven't tried Drumagog, check it out. The plug-in is capable of utterly transforming poorly recorded, flat and lifeless drum sounds, and salvaging mixes that may have otherwise seemed destined for the scrap heap. If 'salvaging' is a word that aptly defines your approach to drum mixing more often than not, you'll love Drumagog 5.